

One thing we have seen over and over again already in this book of Psalms is that David was a man of prayer. In fact, this is one of the things that made David a man after God's own heart; he was a man of prayer.

This psalm is specifically titled by David as "A Prayer of David." **The thing that makes this unique is that the other psalms we have seen contain prayers, but this psalm is a prayer.** The pressures and problems of David's life were things that continually drove him to pray. David had such an intimate relationship with God that he fully expected God to answer him.

In the business world, when a customer is known and trusted, the business is partial to that customer because he is a proven and preferred customer. For example, if you do business often in some place and you are known to be a good customer, you have some perks others do not have. If you do business at a bank and the people know you, they do not check any identification because you are in good standing.

With God there is a similar principle. When God sees He can trust his servant, He is partial to his requests. Once a servant is proven faithful, his prayers are preferred and that servant can quickly move the heart of God because he is a trusted and proven customer at the throne of God.

Now the context of the prayer is that David is under attack by one enemy, probably King Saul. One thing David could do was pray and that is exactly what he did.

Now there are five key prayer parts to this psalm:

PRAYER PART #1 – David prays to God concerning his character . **17:1-5**

As David begins this prayer in **verse 1**, he asks God to listen to him and answer him. David's prayer is very personal and very emotional; however, it is certainly not irrational. David believed he had the right to pray this kind of prayer because he had five character traits that God deemed as necessary and important in order to answer the prayer:

Trait #1 - David was not deceitful with his lips or his life . **17:1**

David was the real thing. He was no hypocrite. He was open and honest before God. He was not deceitful in any way. He did not say one thing to God with his lips and then do something else with his life. As a result he could pray and expect that God would answer. Those who worship God and pray to God, expecting that God will answer must be men of integrity. They must worship and pray not only in spirit, but also in truth. Lying lips or a lying life will not cut it with God.

When David says "hear," "give heed" and "give ear," he uses synonymous Hebrew poetic parallelism to emphatically make his request to God. **It is not that he feared God would not hear him; it was that he feared God would not answer him.**

God sees all and hears all. The problem is not that God won't hear us; the problem is we won't hear God. **A critical key in expecting God to answer us is that we are not deceitful.**

Trait #2 - David was not afraid to ask God for judgment. **17:2**

Dr. Willem VanGemenen said that David asks God for two things in this verse: 1) For His vindication; 2) for His investigation (*Psalms*, Vol. 5, p. 161). David wanted God to look carefully at his situation and give His judgment concerning it. David knew that nothing hypocritical could be found in his life.

People who are right with God do not fear the judgment of God. In fact, those who are right with God cannot wait until God does judge, for then what is right and equitable will be fully manifested. Remember, God always sees the truth. God always knows the right and His judgments will reveal it.

Trait #3 - David had a life that had been tested. **17:3a**

People who are powerful in being able to pray and see God answer are people who have been tested by God and proved faithful to God. Now carefully notice what God tests—He tests the heart. God tests the heart of an individual. David was not afraid of God's tests because he knew they would prove his innocence. He loved God with all of his heart and God could test his heart in the day or the night. It appears that David did much of his praying at night.

When David was withdrawn from people and responsibilities, God could examine him and there was nothing deceitful or hidden in his heart. God can test one's heart at any time, day or night. When God tested his heart, David came up clean and he could pray expecting God to answer.

Trait #4 - David has purposed not to transgress with his mouth. **17:3b**

The tongue is an unruly member and what we say with our lips is a real reflection of what is going on in our hearts. One who is becoming more and more spiritual is one who is becoming more and more careful about what he says. **People who keep quiet on earth will be heard loudly in heaven.**

Trait #5 - David had purposed to walk in the paths of God and not the wicked. **17:4-5**

David stayed off the paths of wicked people (**17:4**) and he stayed on the path of God's Word (**17:5**). David had not slipped off into some area of sin. His life was straight and true and he prayed with full confidence that God could hear and God would answer.

These were qualities of David's life that enabled him to pray with the full hope and confidence that God would be moved to answer his prayers.

PRAYER PART #2 – David prays to God and asks for protection. **17:6-9**

David continues his prayer by asking God to be his refuge that would watch over him and keep him. David had been greatly favored by God and he did not want to lose that favor, so he asks God to keep him, hide him and protect him.

Notice **verse 7**, because it clearly presents the idea that only those who find their refuge in the Savior can expect the loving kindness and mercy of God. The Savior is located at God's "right hand." Who is this Savior located at "Thy right hand?" It is none other than Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:10-12; 12:2; I Pet. 3:21-22).

Until one enters into a relationship with Jesus Christ, one does not have God as his refuge and will not see God answer his prayers.

God had entered into a special relationship with David, and David wanted it always to be that way. So he asks God to shadow him and protect him from the wicked, deadly enemies that were out to destroy him.

PRAYER PART #3 – David prays to God concerning those wicked. **17:9-12**

David is praying and he includes a careful and accurate description of his enemies. Obviously, David is praying for protection from wicked evil enemies from whom he needs protection and he brings out six traits of the wicked:

Trait #1 - The wicked are wicked. **17:9a**

The Hebrew word "wicked" refers to those who are unrighteous in their causes and actions and are guilty because of what they have done (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 781). Wicked people are people who do things that make them guilty in view of God's Word. They are involved in causes and actions which are contrary to the righteous ways and Word of God.

Trait #2 - The wicked are against the godly. **17:9b**

Wicked people are out to ruin godly people. They band together in a deadly assault against one who is godly. There is a devilish comradery in their objectives.

Trait #3 - The wicked have an uncaring heart. **17:10a**

Wicked people do not have hearts that are right with God and His Word and they do not care if they ever do. Their hearts are hard and closed to the true things of God. They are not pliable and they are not teachable. They have uncaring and unfeeling hearts when it comes to God.

Trait #4 - The wicked have arrogant speech. **17:10b**

Wicked arrogant people dare to say anything about any topic or any one even if it totally and completely contradicts God's Word. Wicked people are so proud and defiant that they will use their speech to speak against God and against those faithful to Him.

Martin Luther said it is much easier to protect oneself against physical assault than it is verbal assault. He observed that usually you can see the physical assault coming, but the evil speech of the wicked is crafty and you cannot see it coming and you cannot defend yourself against it.

Trait #5 - The wicked will surround the godly. **17:11**

Wicked people form bonds and they surround the godly and they are looking for anything to bring the godly down. They are like a swarm of flies that swarm around something just looking for an opportunity to land and destroy.

Trait #6 - The wicked want to destroy the godly. **17:12**

They are like a lion that is hiding, eager to rip and tear to shreds its prey.

David was surrounded by many of these kinds of people so he prayed that God would intervene and protect him.

PRAYER PART #4 – David prays to God and asks for immediate action. **17:13-14**

In view of the pending threats, David asks God for three requests:

(Request #1) - David asks God to take action now. **17:13a**

(Request #2) - David asks God to bring the arrogant low. **17:13b**

(Request #3) - David asks God to deliver him from the wicked. **17:13c-14**

David asks God to deliver him with His sword. David asks God to use His hand against the wicked and worldly men who were out to destroy him. Wicked people only live for this life. They do not live with any focus on God. Wicked and worldly people focus on themselves and their money and their children. They do not care about God. They are out to make it big in this world.

PRAYER PART #5 – David promises that he will remain faithful. **17:15**

David basically says regardless of what God does, I will stay committed to righteousness because that is exactly what God is committed to.

In fact, he says he will be satisfied when he gets up in the morning committed to the righteous likeness of God. David promises that he would remain faithful until he would see God face to face.

What an amazing prayer.

There are some wonderful lessons for us to learn from this prayer/psalm:

- 1) When our character is godly, we may pray and expect that God will answer.
- 2) When we are surrounded by enemies, we need to run to the Lord in prayer because He is our refuge.
- 3) When we pray, there should be an urgency and fervency because God takes this into consideration.
- 4) Wicked and worldly people do not care about God or His Word.
- 5) Wicked people look for opportunities to ruin us and destroy us, but in the end they will be destroyed.
- 6) We need to stay committed to being righteous until we see God face to face.